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ABSTRACT

Needs of Idaho residents with developmental disabilities are reported, based on focus group discussions involving the individuals themselves, parents, friends and family members, and service providers. Focus group discussions dealt with empowerment, education, transportation, employment, housing, inclusion in all aspects of community life, family and community support, information and referral, and full citizenship. Access for individuals with developmental disabilities to educational opportunities to promote independence and productivity was identified as a prominent need. Parents want their children with disabilities included in regular classrooms and extracurricular activities. Other identified need areas were career development assistance, continuing training and education, and assistance to help students transition successfully from the education system to the adult world. (SW)

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What Idahoans Are Saying

A Publication from
the Idaho Council On Developmental Disabilities

EC 304148

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March 1995

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What Idahoans Are Saying

Idahoans with developmental disabilities speak out about what they need to ensure full citizenship

Idaho State Council On Developmental Disabilities

Philip E. Batt, Governor

John Goodman, Chairman

March 1995

What Idahoans Are Saying

We are citizens of Idaho. We are your family members, your friends and neighbors, your customers, your co-workers and your fellow parishioners. We are people of worth and value and we want our voices to be heard.

As the State of Idaho prepares to make significant changes in the way it provides services to those of its citizens with developmental disabilities, Idahoans with disabilities are speaking out about what they need to fully participate as citizens. They are asking their fellow citizens to listen to what they have to say.

What Idahoans with developmental disabilities want is pretty much what any Idahoan expects to have:

- the opportunity to receive an education;
- the independence and security that come with a job and a regular paycheck;
- the freedom to choose where to live and with whom;
- access to cultural and recreational activities;
- power to make decisions and have control over their own lives.

In other words, what Idahoans with developmental disabilities want is the "life, liberty and pursuit of happiness" guaranteed to all Idahoans by our Constitution.

They also want the opportunity to participate fully in the life of their communities. They are saying that they have strengths, skills, knowledge and experience that can be valuable assets to employers, professional organizations, community groups, and important in the working of government and the conduct of public affairs. With the appropriate support, people with disabilities will be invaluable contributing members of

I want to have a chance to speak what's on my mind

5

society. They want to be respected and appreciated for their *abilities*.

During 1994, in preparation for the development of a new 1995-97 state plan, the Idaho State Council on Developmental Disabilities conducted a series of "focus groups" throughout the state. These discussions were designed to provide a forum for interested people to express their opinions about how Idaho's policies, programs and services should be formulated not only to meet the needs of citizens with disabilities but to capitalize on their abilities and the abilities of all Idahoans.

Participating in the focus groups were individuals with developmental disabilities, parents, friends and family members, and representatives of various parts of the service delivery system. They included people from ethnic and racial groups and a broad cross-section of consumer age groups.

When asked to put themselves in the role of the Council and describe what they thought its priorities should be over the next three years, focus group participants said they wanted:

- more activities that lead to increased empowerment for individuals with disabilities;
- more opportunities for input from people with disabilities and their families into the way the service delivery system works; and
- a broader range of life choices for individuals and for their families.

The ***number one priority*** among focus group participants was for programs and services that would enhance the abilities of families and individuals with disabilities to advocate for themselves at all levels of the service delivery system.

To better facilitate the first, the ***second priority*** was for the development of a service delivery system that would have greater coordination of services, would allow for more individual decision-making, and would provide assurance of quality.

As a ***third priority,*** focus group participants said they wanted to see more flexibility in the rules so that programs

and services could be funded in ways that would better suit the unique needs of individuals and their families.

Idahoans with disabilities want to be an integral part of the planning process that designs and/or modifies the system that provides the services they need to be full participating members of society. They envision a consumer-driven system that focuses on the individual and the family.

In public interviews, through comments made during advocacy group conferences, in letters to public officials, and in conversations with people in all walks of life, Idahoans with developmental disabilities and their families are saying they want to shape their own future.

Empowerment: We want to have more control over our own everyday lives.

Empowerment was a consistent theme throughout the focus group discussions.

The freedom to make our own decisions about how we confront our life situations is one of our most cherished rights as citizens. Many people with disabilities say that if a staff person or family member tells them they have to do something, they don't really have a choice. They are frustrated when they feel "nobody listens" to them.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying they want to have the same opportunities as everyone else to make informed choices, even if the choices they make are not the ones others would make for them.

Idahoans with disabilities want the power and control to choose where they work, who they live with, what they eat, when they go to bed, and how they spend their leisure time. And they want to have the funds that will enable them to act on their choices.

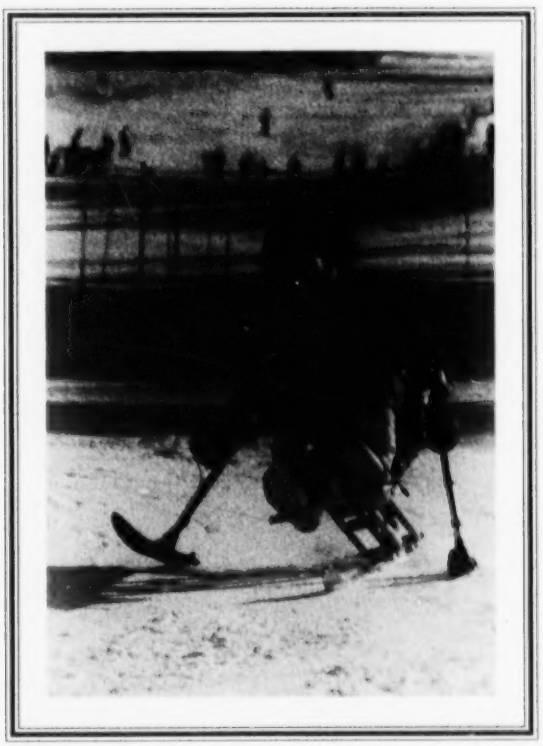
Control over their own financial resources is also important for individuals with disabilities. They want to earn their own money, spend it as they choose, and take care of themselves as much as possible. They want their government support checks delivered directly to them so they can take care of their own needs when and how they choose.

Idahoans with disabilities want to make their own career choices. They want an equal opportunity to be trained and employed in work that is meaningful and

Want to have more say in our own lives.

We're just as important as anyone.

Don't want someone to make my decisions.



9

they want to earn an income that allows them to pursue an independent life within their communities.

They want to work alongside, live in the same community with, and socialize with neighbors and co–workers.

Citizens with disabilities want to participate in public affairs and run for public office if they choose.

Decision-making is the essence of empowerment and Idahoans with disabilities and their families want to be involved in *all* aspects of decision-making that affects their lives, including choosing the programs and services that will be of the greatest benefit to them. True choice means creating the best fit between what an individual needs and what is available.

Families and students with disabilities want to be involved in planning for the support services they need when they move from school to an adult life of independence, productivity, participation, and integration in the community. To make more fully informed choices, families need up-to-date information about opportunities for work, living arrangements, and leisure time activities that may be available to the student with disabilities after graduation. They need an opportunity to review alternatives within the family, with various service providers, and with funding sources.

Idahoans with disabilities can plan for their own futures. They can make decisions about employment, continuing education, and immediate and long-term housing. They want the opportunity to implement their plans and the ability to choose, when necessary, the persons and programs to assist them to live a life of independence and to achieve the goals they have set for themselves.

Idahoans with disabilities are asking to be respected and treated with dignity by their fellow citizens. They want to have their preferences honored, their ability to make decisions accepted, and their potential for growth recognized. They want to have the chance to experience the success and failure that result from their own decisions.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities want the confidence and self-respect that comes with having control over their own lives.

If you don't know what's out there, choices are limited.

Consumers have to have a way to influence the system.

. . . work where I want to work and earn my own money and support myself.

11

Employment: To have an equal opportunity to be trained and employed in work that is meaningful and to receive a fair paycheck.

To be productively employed is a basic value of Idaho society and is a foundation stone for empowerment. Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying they want to have the same opportunity as anyone else to work and to earn a level of income sufficient to meet basic needs and contribute to a household; to maintain self-respect; and to have access to the goods and services that are an integral part of Idaho's quality of life.

Idahoans with disabilities want to work in typical work settings where they are integrated with non-disabled peers. They want the opportunity to be considered for promotion. They want the same benefits that workers without disabilities have. They want to be able to pursue a higher standard of living in the career of their choice whether that means working for a company, operating a small business, or through becoming self-employed.

In some situations, ensuring equal access to the workplace requires that individuals with developmental disabilities be supported, for varying lengths of time, to find, obtain and retain employment. They want supports to be provided at the work site and if they need a ride to and from the job.

Idahoans want their support services to be flexible — to be determined and provided on the basis of the individual's needs and preferences. They want the services provided to them to focus not only on their immediate needs but also to encourage independence, help

I want people to at least give me a chance. I know I can do it.

If we're doing something wrong, tell us right away so we can correct it.

I want to change myself. I want a different job. I could mow lawns, paint houses.

them to become more productive, and offer them the means to become more integrated into the community.

Idahoans with disabilities are asking employers, coworkers, colleagues and associates to keep an open mind and allow them to demonstrate their capabilities. They will show that they can be hard-working, productive, and valued employees.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities want to work and pursue career and economic opportunities without jeopardizing the rights or benefits that assure the continuing support they need to maintain their independence. Fear of the loss of eligibility for services and income security benefits is a major barrier to becoming employed for many individuals with disabilities.

Would like a different job — in community — would like to work on cars.

They are saying that as people with disabilities have greater access to and become more integrated into the regular workplace and into the community, the attitudes of the larger society toward them will change. As all people work together, they will become more accepting of differences as well as more knowledgeable about similarities between themselves and others.

Our entire society benefits when Idahoans with disabilities are supported by a system and an environment that enables them to realize their full potential as productive workers, taxpayers and contributing members of their communities.

Transportation: Accessible, affordable transportation is essential to maintaining independence.

Within our society, the freedom to move from place to place as and when we choose is a fundamental right. For people with limited mobility, transportation is a critical issue. Any effort on the part of Idahoans with developmental disabilities to seek and maintain employment, to live as independently as they choose, and to be fully integrated into their communities is dependent upon adequate, reliable transportation.

Idaho is a mountainous rural state with long distances between population centers. Many people, including people with disabilities, live on farms and ranches and in small towns. Services are not available in every community and jobs are often some distance away in a neighboring town or community.

Mobility aids and other adaptive technology have made it possible for some people with disabilities to move about with greater ease.

However, many people with disabilities are not able to provide independent mobility for themselves. Public transportation services often are non-existent or don't meet the transportation needs of people with disabilities for flexible hours of operation, travel routes, or other necessary assistance or accommodation.

Service providers who are assisting Idahoans with developmental disabilities to move into integrated workplace situations, point out that entry level jobs often require evenings and weekend work. Lack of transportation outside traditional work hours prevents people with disabilities from

Transportation is a major problem in job placement.

Can't get where I want to go when I want to go.

Giving someone a ride to work — it's that simple but that vital.

You can't take a job if you can't get to it.

accepting employment that might otherwise be available to them.

The lack of efficient, affordable, and accessible transportation to get to a job or anywhere else they want to go results in limiting the choices for people with disabilities in their everyday activities and hampering their opportunity to be in control of their own lives.

Citizens with disabilities are saying that Idaho needs a more flexible transportation system. They are urging that consideration be given to innovative alternatives, such as public and private sector partnerships, which could provide transportation for people with disabilities.

Families and other members of the community are often willing to provide transportation by using their own vehicles. Idahoans with disabilities want to see more flexibility in rules and funding sources that might be able to provide financial help for families who are willing to modify their own vehicles to provide transportation.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities say that the lack of transportation alternatives is a major barrier to their ability to become integrated in the workplace and to lead an independent life within their communities.

Look at alternatives: Increase resources to help families modify their own vehicles.

If I could change one thing
— get my own apartment.

17

Housing: We want to decide where we live and be in charge of our own living arrangements.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities want to have real choices when it comes to making decisions about their housing. They want to decide for themselves where and how they live.

For many, their preference is for living in the general community. These Idahoans are saying they want the opportunity for inclusion in their communities as well as for integration in the workplace.

Whether it's at home with their families, in an apartment — alone or with companions — Idahoans with disabilities want to be in control of their own living arrangements. They want to choose where they live and with whom. They want to live in a home with convenient physical access that provides security, comfort, and personal space at a price they can afford, and in close proximity to community resources and social activities.

They want to have control over their living environment, to make their own decisions about their furnishings and surroundings, and to be in charge of their own daily activities.

People with disabilities have a right to be safe and secure in their own homes.

Individuals and their families say they want to have more control, authority, and power, as well as adequate resources, to assure their safety and security in inclusive community settings.

The right of voluntary association is central to the principle of choice. Citizens with developmental disabilities

Want to handle my own money — earn and control my own money.

My own pet.

We want to get married . . . we don't want anyone to stop us.

are saying they don't want others to decide for them with whom and under what circumstances they spend their time and lives. They have the right to establish friendships and relationships with persons of their choice, with or without disabilities, and the option of setting up shared living arrangements. They also want to participate in the selection of staff who assist them to live in integrated situations in the community.

Appropriate services that support maximum independence can greatly enhance the opportunities for people with disabilities to become integrated in their community regardless of their disability. Idahoans with disabilities are saying that services related to housing should be designed to meet the needs of the consumer and should promote physical and social integration and encourage independence. Services should be provided in ways that are the least intrusive to the lives of the people receiving them.

With a self-determined personal support system, individuals will have a greater opportunity to purchase the supports they require to live in their own homes.

In some cases, families of children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities would prefer to have financial and support services provided in a way that allows the family member to live at home, eliminating the need for out-of-the-home placement.

Everyone experiences many transitional periods throughout their lives and every transition has unique concerns. Idahoans with developmental disabilities want to have the same opportunity as everyone else to experience the excitement and anticipation that accompanies change. They want to be involved in both the planning and decision-making that determines the services they will need to make a successful transition from school to work or from home to independent living.

The concepts of choice, community inclusion, and

independence that contribute to the quality of life for Idahoans with disabilities are, to an extent, determined by an individual's employment status and income level. With gainful employment, the opportunity for Idahoans with disabilities to make choices about their housing is greatly enhanced.

Making choices about where they live and with whom they associate fosters the independence that Idahoans with developmental disabilities say they want. Working, living, and spending leisure time in the community with their peers without disabilities promotes the goal of integration.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are hopeful that through proximity, the larger community will come to understand more about them and their disabilities and, ultimately, will become friends or, at least, friendly neighbors.

. . . help people get out — out in community
— take trips — more jobs — more money
— out in community.

21

Inclusion: We want the opportunity to participate in all aspects of the life of our communities.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying they want to move about freely in their communities and take part in any aspect of community life they choose.

They want to work in integrated job settings and live in individual housing within the community rather than in institutional settings.

They want to be in close proximity to community resources so that when they choose, they can go to a movie, get a pizza or enjoy a picnic in the park.

They want to associate with friends of their own choosing with whom they can enjoy social functions, participate in sports and recreational activities, attend a concert or play in a band.

They want the opportunity to establish friendships and relationships and, if they wish, to share living arrangements with persons of their own choosing. Parents of children with developmental disabilities want their children to have the opportunity to attend the regular, age appropriate classes with other young people from their neighborhoods. It is important to parents to have opportunities to work with schools and other agencies to determine what supports are necessary to make inclusion successful.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying they want to be treated and receive the support services they need in community settings rather than institutional ones. When planning and making decisions about their own lives, they recognize and

Getting more people to understand us, our disability, and what we can do — that we're human.

We're different but we do work and we don't want to be made fun of.

I have a disability. Why do people do it?

They don't have a clue. If they knew, they'd think twice about it.

Keep sense of humor.

welcome the support of service providers.

Attitudes and perceptions of all people are extremely important to the success of efforts on the part of Idahoans with disabilities to achieve inclusion into the larger community. Focus group participants freely expressed their disappointment at the lack of understanding shown by some people. People with disabilities spoke frankly about the hurt they feel when others make fun of them as they become integrated and begin to participate in community life.

They want to see more incentives to promote inclusion in local community associations. They are willing to actively participate in community groups and organizations that welcome people with disabilities.

They feel that as Idahoans without disabilities come to know their fellow Idahoans with disabilities and understand their disabilities, the more they also will come to recognize their abilities. Idahoans with disabilities are convinced that by moving freely about the community, interacting with others, doing the things that everyone else does, they can help to educate and promote acceptance of people with disabilities by the larger community.

Everyone will benefit, and all people will have a greater understanding of one another. In turn, this will enhance the opportunity for citizens with disabilities to contribute more fully to the life of their own community.

People with developmental disabilities are hopeful that more non-disabled Idahoans will take opportunities to get to know their neighbors with disabilities as well as those they meet on the job or at community events.

Family and Community Support: We want to decide for ourselves what we need and choose our own support services.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying that they and their families are the best ones to determine what their needs are. They want the opportunity to choose the services and supports they feel will allow them to achieve their desired lifestyle.

Support systems for people with disabilities can take a variety of forms such as education, health care, social services, access to assistive technology and personal assistance services.

Idahoans are saying that support services for developmentally disabled citizens should be broadly defined, easily accessible, flexible, and responsive to the unique needs of the individual, the family and the community and arranged to promote their integration and participation in their community.

There are also the less formal natural support systems that exist closer to home, including friends, neighbors, schools, community and religious organizations, and supportive local businesses.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying these natural support systems can be encouraged and strengthened through additional assistance from public and private agencies.

For many people with developmental disabilities, the commitment of their families is the greatest resource available to them. Throughout the lifetime of individuals with developmental disabilities, their families may face a variety of physical, emotional and economic stresses and challenges.

If every parent had a pamphlet or book . . . where to go, what to do . . . it would help.

Need counseling for family relationships.

We need to know the steps you go through to meet your child's needs in public from teacher to legal advice.

. . . a day camp for assisted outdoor fun.

The number and type of resources that families have available to them affect the way in which they are able to adapt to these experiences.

"Tailored services" was an important part of the focus group discussions. Idahoans with disabilities want to see a wide range of support services, including cash subsidies, professional or agency-operated support services, counseling, and training, made available to families of children, youth and adults with developmental disabilities to prevent the need for out-of-home placement and to ease financial burdens or caregiving stress. Assistance with future planning is an essential component of family support.

Idahoans with disabilities and their families want to be fully informed about their rights and options related to individual services. They are asking that particular attention be paid to the needs and preferences of the consumer. Individual service programs should be designed to help consumers participate in all aspects of sociocultural life including home, school, employment, cultural, spiritual, recreational, and political life, and to fulfill the responsibilities associated with that life.

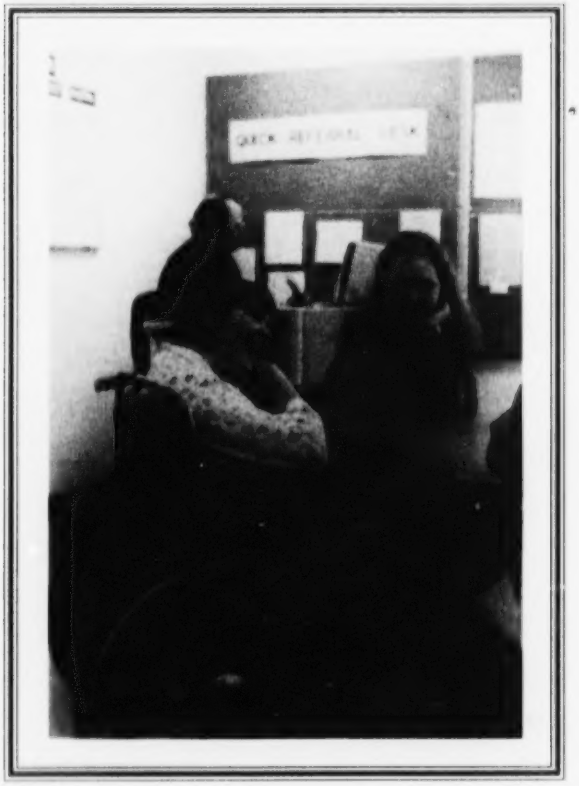
Parents of children and young people with developmental disabilities want to be assured that a reliable system of supports and services will be in place that will guarantee the well-being and promote independence and integration into the community for their child.

Rather than forcing the family to "fit" the available services, individuals and their families believe the support systems can be flexible, individualized, and responsive to the needs identified by the family.

In some cases, family support is needed throughout the lifetime of the individual with disabilities.

Because family needs change, service options must be flexible. Support is particularly crucial during periods of transition as when the family member with disabilities is exiting the school system or is preparing to live more independently outside the family home. Parents seek to be involved in *all* the decisions affecting their children with disabilities.

Need to know what resources there are.
Need navigators through the system.



Parents expect the best possible quality of life for their child with developmental disabilities as well as for their entire family. They want their child to have a valuable role within the life of the family, to enjoy the experiences and benefits of family life, and to form meaningful relationships. And they believe family supports will foster family unity and reduce family stress.

Families caring for a family member with a developmental disability need to have convenient, quick, and easy access to support services. They also need greater access to any information that will enhance their own abilities to meet many of their own needs.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities want a support system that helps people with disabilities make their own decisions and act on their own choices. They recognize family and community support as a strong part of that system. They want a system that respects them as individuals and as citizens, that listens to what they have to say, and that is designed to assist them to be part of the life of the community and not separate from it.

Education: To receive a free public education appropriate to individual needs and to have access to educational opportunities throughout adulthood.

The role of education in the lives of people with developmental disabilities is critical. The educational system serves students during their important developmental years when the course of their future is charted.

All Idaho children have the right to an education. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act mandates a free and appropriate public education for all special education students, including students with developmental disabilities.

Children with disabilities are students who, by virtue of their disability, may qualify for additional funding for necessary supports and services. They have the right, and their parents want them to have the opportunity, to be educated and included in the same classrooms and activities as any other student.

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act provides for financial assistance to local school districts to enhance each district's ability to educate children with unique needs alongside their non-disabled peers rather than establish separate or parallel education systems.

Ultimately, it is the parents' responsibility.

Need to know what resources there are; parents need negotiation skills — need help to learn them.

Parents of children with developmental disabilities want the same things for their children as do parents of children without disabilities — access to educational opportunities that will allow their children to realize their full potential to lead their lives as independently and productively as possible.

National studies have shown that special education students tend to do better

Parents will be there forever . . .
Child is not as important to anyone else.

when they can attend classes with students who don't have disabilities. Many parents of children with developmental disabilities agree that their child learns better in the regular classroom. They encourage schools and other public agencies to determine the best ways to effectively include children with developmental disabilities into regular education classrooms.

Parents are saying that the social and extra-curricular experiences of school life can enhance the important interpersonal skills that will be needed by their children throughout their lives. They want their children to be included in these activities as well as educational environments with students their own age who do not have disabilities.

Parents of children and young people with developmental disabilities worry about many of the same things that other parents do — are they getting the most out of their classes, who their friends are, how they spend after-school time, have they been skipping school, the exposure to circumstances and influences that might be harmful to their child.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities have the right and want to be afforded the opportunity for career development and continuing training and education. They are asking that career planning and counseling for persons with disabilities begin as early as possible with school activities designed to teach communication and social skills and familiarize students with basic work concepts. Vocational and community living skills can be taught in the community as well as in school.

Biggest frustration is the narrow options for kids once they graduate from high school.

Individuals and families want career planning assistance, including college, postgraduate programs, vocational training, and other opportunities for growth, to be made available as needed over the lifetime of the person with disabilities. They are saying that this type of assistance will increase the potential for individuals with developmental disabilities to maintain employment and move toward greater independence.

Parents in the focus groups expressed their concerns about the level of the community

I realize that truancy does not fit into the criteria of handicapped condition but it is happening.

support available to their children once they graduate from school. They are saying they need to have information about vocational opportunities and how their sons and daughters with disabilities have access to those opportunities. Students and their families want practical information that will help the student with disabilities to transition successfully from the education system to the adult world.

One of the fundamental purposes of education in American society is to prepare students to be citizens and to participate in our democracy. Parents of students with developmental disabilities are saying they want no less for their children.

Information and Referral: Finding information is often a difficult and time-consuming task.

Modern technology has made vast changes and many improvements in the lives of every American. Large statewide information systems can provide much needed information to various consumer groups, including Idahoans with developmental disabilities and their families. It is essential, however, that consumers have the ability to access such a system.

A major concern expressed by a majority of focus group participants was that Idaho's information system for citizens with developmental disabilities needs to be a lot more user-friendly in the way it addresses the unique needs of its consumers.

A number of participants said they knew of people with disabilities and/or their families who could benefit from services and supports and might, indeed, be eligible for them but who needed assistance in "getting through the maze." Or, if they were able to obtain services, did not feel they were getting what they wanted or needed.

Knowledge is empowerment and individuals with disabilities and their families say they need to have more knowledge about:

- what, where and when services and funding are available;
- eligibility for support services and funding;
- their rights and options related to personal assistance services;
- the rights people with disabilities have not to be discriminated against;
- how to access information;
- how to use knowledge to enhance self-determination and direct their own destiny.

It's impossible to find out what's available . . . to get what you need.

I can get a lot more done by going around the system than by working with it.

What we're talking about is not impossible. A regionalized database. That's not impossible given our technology.

33

Idahoans with developmental disabilities and their families want a consumer-driven support system that is locally or regionally controlled. They prefer to have funding targeted toward the consumer rather than anchored in a particular program or service. They feel that such a system would allow for decision-making to occur closer to the consumer and would result in greater flexibility in responding to his/her real needs.

Parents recognize that no single agency can provide all services needed by the child and family. They understand that education, health, mental health, social services and other generic services must be coordinated to assure a comprehensive system of support. They know that Idaho's long distances between communities presents certain barriers to service delivery.

But individuals and families want a convenient, quick and easily accessible information and referral system that would overcome many of the coordination problems. They are saying they need assistance to help them navigate the system. They want the professionals to help them figure out how to get what they themselves have determined as their need rather than trying to match an individual or a family with a particular program.

Parents are saying they much prefer a system with a single entry point with the capability of guiding them through the maze of programs for which they might be eligible, and that would be responsive to the needs of their child and/or family.

Citizens with disabilities and their families are asking that support services be focused on the individual and/or family and that there be greater coordination among all the agencies within the service delivery system. They want an information and referral system that enhances the ability of individuals with developmental disabilities and their families to choose from among the services and supports available, the ones that best suit their own needs.

Using modern technology to provide up-to-date information in accessible formats and in a timely way to Idahoans with developmental disabilities and their families will help make this a reality.

I can make choices based on information I have but —

Single point of entry — this is what I need: What is available? Where? Who? What are my rights?

I can do anything you can do if not better.

35

Full citizenship . . . for everyone!

As they work towards the goal of ensuring full citizenship, Idahoans with developmental disabilities, their families, friends, associates and advocates are speaking out in ever-increasing numbers.

What they are saying is that people with developmental disabilities are vital and integral members of our society and want to participate fully in all aspects of community life including:

- voting and running for office
- sitting on community boards
- participating in community events
- being asked for their opinion

Idahoans with developmental disabilities can be in charge of their own lives. They want their fellow citizens to understand that they are valuable, contributing members of society. They are saying that they themselves are the best ones to decide what assistance they need.

They want Idaho to move toward a comprehensive, community-based service system that is fully accessible, user-friendly and tailored to needs and desires of individuals with disabilities and their families.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities have the same right as everyone else to a free and appropriate public education. Parents want their children with disabilities to grow up with their families and attend the same schools and classrooms as the other kids in the neighborhood.

Idahoans are saying they want opportunities to continue their education, to learn new skills, and to pursue academic

achievement. They expect to receive an education that will allow them to live up to their fullest potential and become as independent as possible.

Idahoans with developmental disabilities want to work in integrated settings at a job that will pay them enough to provide for their own basic needs. They also want to be promoted, to have a chance to earn more money for themselves and their families, and to accumulate wealth. They want to be able to move up the ladder of success.

As full participating citizens, Idahoans with developmental disabilities want to live integrated into their communities, to own property or to rent, to associate with other people of their own choosing, and to become an integral part of the great diversity that makes up the American culture.

ties as they choose.

They are saying that citizens with disabilities can determine their own futures and they want all the educational and informational tools available to assist them in achieving this goal.

Idahoans with disabilities are saying they enjoy living, learning, working, loving, shopping, having fun alongside all their fellow citizens.

They want their fellow citizens to understand that when all Idahoans are ensured full citizenship, everyone benefits:

- Citizens with disabilities will be more productive, mobile and prosperous and able to take a more active role and contribute in greater measure to the whole society.
- Children who attend schools with inclusive classes will grow up knowing that disabilities are part of the human experience.

Social and cultural activities, entertainment, recreation, travel, and intellectual pursuits are essential components of a stimulating and fulfilling life. Idahoans with developmental disabilities want the same opportunities as other citizens have to engage in these activi-

- Employers and employees working alongside a person with a disability will have an opportunity to develop a greater sensitivity for others and a greater appreciation for the accomplishments of others.

• Householders and residents who live in integrated communities and develop friendships with their neighbors with disabilities will come to understand that everyone is unique.

Acceptance of diversity and respect for individual differences and abilities are the strengths of America's future.

What Idahoans with developmental disabilities are saying is —

We want to help build the future — for ourselves and for all Idahoans.

Other Publications Available

from the Idaho Council On Developmental Disabilities

• *Journey To Success: Discovering Vocational Opportunities For Idahoans With Disabilities, Revised Edition* – January, 1994 Idaho State Council on Developmental Disabilities

• *Jornada al Exito: Descubriendo Oportunidades Vocacionales para Cuidadanos de Idaho con Incapacidades* – enero de 1995.

• *Keys to the Future: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Disabilities* – Second Printing: August 1992.

• *Las Llaves para el Futuro: Un Libro para Los Padres de Niños con Problemas de Desarrollo* – Tercera Edición (español) en febrero de 1994.

• Position Statements of the Idaho State Council on Developmental Disabilities - January, 1993.

• Idaho Transition Report: Executive Summary of Transition Services for Students in Special Education - November, 1991.

• *Visions & Values*, a quarterly newsletter published by the Idaho State Council on Developmental Disabilities.

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Idaho State Council on Developmental Disabilities

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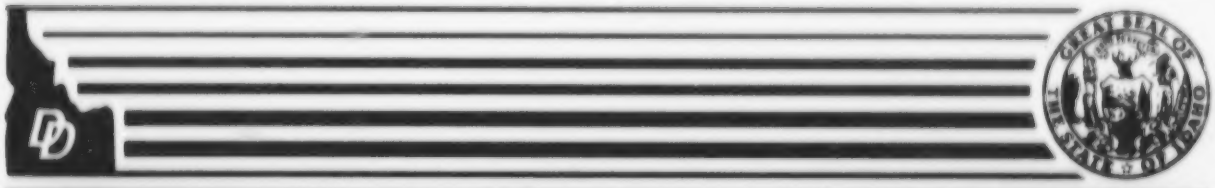

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